

TESTIMONY OF JOSEPH KUNG, PRESIDENT
THE CARDINAL KUNG FOUNDATION

BEFORE
THE COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SUBCOMMITTEE ON AFRICA, GLOBAL HUMAN RIGHTS
AND
INTERNATIONAL OPERATIONS

“The Persecution of the Underground Roman Catholic Church and Comments”
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Prepared Statements

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Mr. Congressman and Ms. Congresslady:

I was here 8 months ago in April, testifying about the atrocious and continuing persecution and sufferings of the underground Roman Catholic Church in China. I testified, among many other happenings, about a bishop, Bishop Su Zhimin 蘇志民主教, who was arrested nine years ago on October 8, 1997, and has since disappeared. We desperately need to know if Bishop Su is dead or alive. I have heard that if Bishop were still alive, he would not be in good health because of multiple ailments. We beg you, Mr. Congressman and Ms Congresslady, to use your influence to the effect that, if bishop Su is still alive, the Chinese authority release him from captivity, if not for his pastoral duty in his own diocese, then for the purpose of allowing him to go overseas to spend the twilight years of his life in a quiet and prayerful surroundings. He deserves nothing less.

Bishop An Shuxin 安樹新主教, the auxiliary bishop to Bishop Su Zhimin, has been released from prison in August this year after more than ten years confinement since May 1996. Bishop An is now under very strict surveillance by the Chinese authority.

There are seven priests serving the diocese of Baoding in Hebei now in jail.

The Chinese authority built a special iron cage, like that used for animals, for confining three of these priests in an extremely uncomfortable, cruel, and humiliating position. This cage is housed in one of the detention centers of the police department in Xushui county 徐水縣 in Baoding. There names are Father Yen Shuangxi 尹雙喜神父 arrested in 2003, Father Guo Erguang 郭二光神父 arrested in 2001, and Father Zhang Zhenquan 張振全神父 arrested in 2001.

When Bishop Su and Bishop An both disappeared and held in captivity, Father HUO Junlong 霍俊龍神父 was the administrator of the Baoding underground diocese. More than two years ago on August 16, 2004, Father Huo, together with seven other underground priests and two seminarians, was arrested. Father HUO is a very important priest in the underground diocese of Baoding. He has been in jail ever since and has disappeared.

Father Lu GenJun 鹿根君神父 was to meet his priest friend at the Baoding railway station. On his way to the station, a speeding car screeched to a halt. The door popped open, and several men, shouting and screaming, scrambled out and headed for Father Lu. The priest ran. It was a short chase. The men who were the plainclothes police officers captured Father Lu. It was February 17 of this year.

Father Lu was first arrested in 1990, and detained for one month. He was arrested again on May 23, 1994, and released after a short period of detention. He was arrested again August 29, 1994, and released the following October 19. He was arrested again April 5, 1998, Palm Sunday, and detained for a short time. He was arrested again March 31, 2001, a couple weeks before Easter and was sent to labor camp for three years for, among other charges, his being a priest not recognized by the Patriotic Association, and his conducting illegal evangelization. He was released March 30, 2004. Approximately 6 weeks later, on May 14, Father Lu was arrested again while he was preparing to give talks to Catholic young married couples. He was released a few days later. He was arrested again this year on February 17 as I had described above. We do not know where he is now. Such is the typical life of a devoted servant of God in China.

The other two priests kept in captivity in Baoding are Father Ma Shunbao 馬順寶神父 and Father Ma Wuyong 馬武勇神父, both were arrested in 2003 and detained in QingYuan County 清苑縣 detention center in Baoding City.

Bishop Jia Zhiguo 賈志國主教, the Bishop of Zheng Ding 正定 in Hebei, was finally released on September 25 this year after he was dragged to jail from a hospital three months earlier, on June 25, while he was still very sick with his catheter in place after his operation. He was arrested 9 times since January 2004. He is now under 24 hour surveillance by the Chinese authority. He is the bishop who is taking care of approximately 100 handicapped children in his house. However, two days ago, I received an urgent message from China that Bishop Jia was arrested again at 8 AM Dec. 19. The reason for his arrest was that he was about to celebrate his 26th anniversary of being consecrated as a bishop

Two priests, Father Shao Zhumin 邵祝敏神父 and Father Jiang Sunian 姜溯念神父 from the diocese of Wenzhou 溫州 in Zhejiang 浙江, one its vicar general and the other its chancellor, were arrested on September 25 this year on their way home from a visit to a number of cities in Europe, including the Vatican. They were arrested near the border of Kowloon, HongKong, which is still thousands of miles from their home.

Bishop Yao Liang 姚良主教, 82 years of age, the auxiliary bishop of Xiwanzi 西灣子 in Hebei, was arrested again by the Chinese authority on July 30 this year. He is still detained. Two days later on August 2, 90 underground Catholic faithful were arrested, although most of them were released shortly thereafter.

I can go on and on listing these arrests. Let me provide some context.

There are altogether seven underground bishops still in jail. As I testified 8 months ago, all of the underground bishops in China are still either arrested and now in jail, or under house arrest, or under strict surveillance, or in hiding, or on the run, or simply missing. In addition, we know there are approximately 2 dozen priests also in jail. This list is by no means complete. My educated guess is that there are hundreds in jail.

In short, regardless of the recent release of one bishop, there is no improvement in the suppression of religious freedom in China.

I urgently request that the international Red Cross, Amnesty International, the United Nations, the human rights government officials in the United States, the International Olympic Committee, the World Trade Organization, and all freedom-loving countries of good conscience to investigate the cruel treatments of religious believers described above and to decide whether China has violated the conditions for joining these organizations or for enjoying preferential treatments from various countries.

China's irresponsible behavior has undoubtedly violated the generally accepted international standards of freedom of religion. Is it not also true that allowing China's continuing persecution of religious believers also violates the founding principles of these very organizations and countries? If so, then, with what leverage still left that we may be able to muster, together we need to challenge this modern China into an era of true religious freedom, and to request the Chinese authority to release all its religious prisoners and to exonerate their criminal charges.

Last but not least, during this Christmas season, we need to remember and respect these sufferings of religious believers in China. May they also have joy and warmth in their joyless and cold prisons.

Thank you.